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EXCISE

FRIDAY
MARCH 26, 1954

Barrett McGurn came to see me this morning to obtain any views I might have on the present situation in France regarding EDC.

I had lunch with the Princeton graduates in Paris. They meet monthly under the presidency of Johnson Garrett. There were about twenty men present, amongst them Don Douglas from Chicago, who was once my brother Jim's room-mate at college. He doesn't look a day over 40 and he is 61 -- probably comes from eating his own Quaker Oats.

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PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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Before leaving the office tonight Van Helmont came in and told us about Mollet's conversation with Bidault today. If the agreement which they presumably reached is confirmed in writing this will be a large step forward. However, I shall not be satisfied unless it meets with the approval of Laniel and this still remains doubtful. We will send a telegram on this subject tomorrow morning after we have gathered certain additional information.

Eva and Bert Jolis came to dinner with Nancy Lancaster and ourselves this evening. After dinner we went to the theater to see "La Répétition" with Jean Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud in the leading parts. The acting was fine, the dialogue good, but the plot rather thin, being, it seemed to me, a somewhat feeble adaptation of the main cynical theme running through "Les Liaisons Dangereuses".

Bert Jolis had been recently on a long trip to Africa, in the course of which he visited parts of it new to him, including the Belgian Congo and the Ivory Coast.

In talking about his partnership with French business interests, he commented that in directors' meetings or in personal conversation the exposition by Frenchmen of business problems was always superb but their implementation of decisions reached was inefficient, and often so much so as to be maddening to their associates. He thinks also French employers are extremely careless about personnel problems,

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and the cruelty and indifference of the French to the difficulties and distresses of fellow Frenchmen is frequently shocking. According to his account, employees are summarily discharged for minor delinquencies which in the United States would merely occasion a rebuke.

After the theater, which terminated at midnight, we went to a place on Rue de Grenelle called "Les Quatre Saisons". There is a small dance floor, bar, and a lot of plain tables and chairs in an old cellar. No food is served but there is an abundance of drink. The variety show is amazingly good and displays a great range of talent, [redacted]. We got home about 2:30.

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